Leadership Competencies

L eadership competencies are measurable patterns of behavior essential to leading. The Coast Guard has identified 21 competencies consistent with our missions, work force, and core values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty. More information on Coast Guard Leadership can be found in COMDTINST 5351.1.

The competencies fall into three broad categories: SELF, WORKING WITH OTHERS, and PERFORMANCE. Together, these leadership competencies are key skills that are crucial to achieving success as a leader in the challenging environment of today's Coast Guard.

In small groups, read each competency definition (on the next 3 pages). After each definition, have members of the group come up with personal examples of how that competency impacts a leader's ability to achieve success. Then have individuals in the group identify ways they can begin to put this competency into action.

Self

Fundamental to successful development as a leader is an understanding of self and one's own abilities, including personality, values, preferences, and potential as a Coast Guard member.

Accountability and Responsibility: Understand the Coast Guard's character and structure as a military service committed to being "Always Ready;" Recognize and use the chain of command appropriately; Understand the impact of your behavior on others, your unit, and the Coast Guard organization; Take ownership of your areas of responsibility; Use public resources efficiently.

Aligning Values: Understand and embody the Coast Guard's core values: Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty; Align your personal behavior with the Coast Guard's core values; Hold peers and subordinates accountable to the core values

Followership: Understand that all Coast Guard personnel are followers; Look to leaders for guidance and feedback on your performance; Seek and accept challenging tasks to learn and develop competence; Seek to understand others through listening and questioning; Work with leaders to ensure successful mission accomplishment.

Health and well being: Promote a safe work environment for yourself and others; Recognize and manage stress; Set a personal health example, emphasizing physical fitness and emotional strength; Encourage others to maintain health and well being.

Personal Conduct: Personify high standards of honesty, integrity, trust, openness, fairness and compassion; Be self-motivated, professional, and results-oriented; Have confidence in your own abilities and ideas; Learn your strengths and weaknesses; Use position and personal power appropriately.

Self Awareness and Learning: Seek opportunities for self-development and life-long learning; Choose to learn and grow from experience; Adapt your behavior and work methods to changing conditions and unexpected obstacles; Seek feedback on your personal and professional strengths and areas for improvement; Learn to manage your time effectively.

Technical Proficiency: Be prepared: learn, develop, and demonstrate technical and functional expertise in your areas of responsibility; Understand how your skills and actions contribute to mission readiness and performance; Keep current on technological advances; Effectively organize and prioritize tasks.

Working with Others

Leadership involves working with and influencing others to achieve common goals. Coast Guard people interact with others in many ways, whether as supervisor, mentor, manager, team member, team leader, peer, or subordinate. Positive professional relationships provide a foundation for the success of our Service.

Influencing Others: Motivate others to achieve desired outcomes by directing, coaching, and delegating as the situation requires; Recognize the importance of building professional relationships; Develop networks of contacts and colleagues; Establish rapport with key players; Empower others by delegating power and responsibility and hold them accountable; Gain cooperation and commitment from others.

Respect for Others and Diversity Management: Understand and support the Coast Guard's commitment to respect for every individual in the workplace; Recognize and promote the value of diversity; Foster an environment that supports diverse individuals and perspectives, fairness, dignity, compassion, and creativity in the workplace.

Looking out for Others: Recognize the needs and abilities of others, particularly subordinates; Ensure fair and equitable treatment; Provide opportunities for professional development; Recognize and reward performance; Support and assist others in professional and personal situations.

Effective Communication: Learn to express facts and ideas succinctly and logically; Be an active and supportive listener; Encourage open exchange of ideas; Communicate face-to-face when possible; Write clearly and concisely; Speak effectively before an audience; Distinguish between personal and official communication situations and act accordingly.

Group Dynamics: Build commitment, pride, team spirit, and strong relationships; Recognize and contribute to group efforts; Foster group identity and cooperation; Motivate and guide others toward goal accomplishment; Consider and respond to others' needs and capabilities.

Leadership Theory: Study and understand different leadership theories and styles; Work with subordinates to develop their leadership knowledge and skills; Adapt leadership approaches to meet varying situations including crises.

Mentoring: Assist others in their development by sharing your experience and knowledge, Provide feedback to others on their leadership and career development; Help others identify professional goals, strengths, and areas for improvement.

Performance

Coast Guard people constantly face challenges in mission operations. To meet these challenges, leaders must apply leadership competencies in their daily duties.

Vision Development and Implementation: Set and work toward a vision for your unit, division, or department in line with the Coast Guard's overall vision, missions, strategy, and values; Establish and clearly communicate objectives; Initiate action and provide support and systems to achieve goals; Manage and champion organizational improvement.

Customer Focus: Focus on external requirements; Actively seek feedback and suggestions and encourage others to do the same; Ensure internal and external customers' needs are met.

Decision-Making and Problem Solving: Learn to identify and analyze problems under normal and extreme conditions; Learn to consider and assess risks and alternatives; Use facts, input from systems, input from others, and sound judgment to reach conclusions; Learn to lead effectively in crisis, keeping focus on key information and decision points; Commit to action; be as decisive as a situation demands; Involve others in decisions that affect them; Evaluate the impact of your decisions.

Conflict Management: Encourage open communication about controversial issues; Promote collaboration to manage contention; Confront conflict constructively to minimize impact to self, others, and the organization.

Performance Appraisal: Use goal setting, delegation, and effective communications to manage performance effectively; Articulate performance expectations to subordinates; Coach and provide feedback to subordinates continuously; Document performance; Seek out performance expectations for yourself and your unit.

Management and Process Improvement: Use goals, milestones, and control mechanisms to measure and manage performance; Evaluate progress and outcomes of current processes; Seek continuous improvement through periodic assessments; Improve products and services to meet changing customer needs.

Workforce Management Systems: Understand and support civilian and military promotion, advancement, training, assignment, and award systems; Support personnel working on advancement, special programs, training, and future assignments; Use formal reward systems to recognize positive performance and development.